Reflections

Friday, December 4, 2020

Generalizations work (until they don't)

Unlike natural phenomena like orbiting planets or geologic formations, there are no consistent and perfect laws of human behavior.

If we're talking about groups of people, if we're teaching, leading or trying to predict future behavior (all three are related) then we're making a generalization.

And perhaps we don't realize it, or aren't clear that we are.

"In general, in many settings, most kindergarten kids have trouble getting through a long day without a nap."

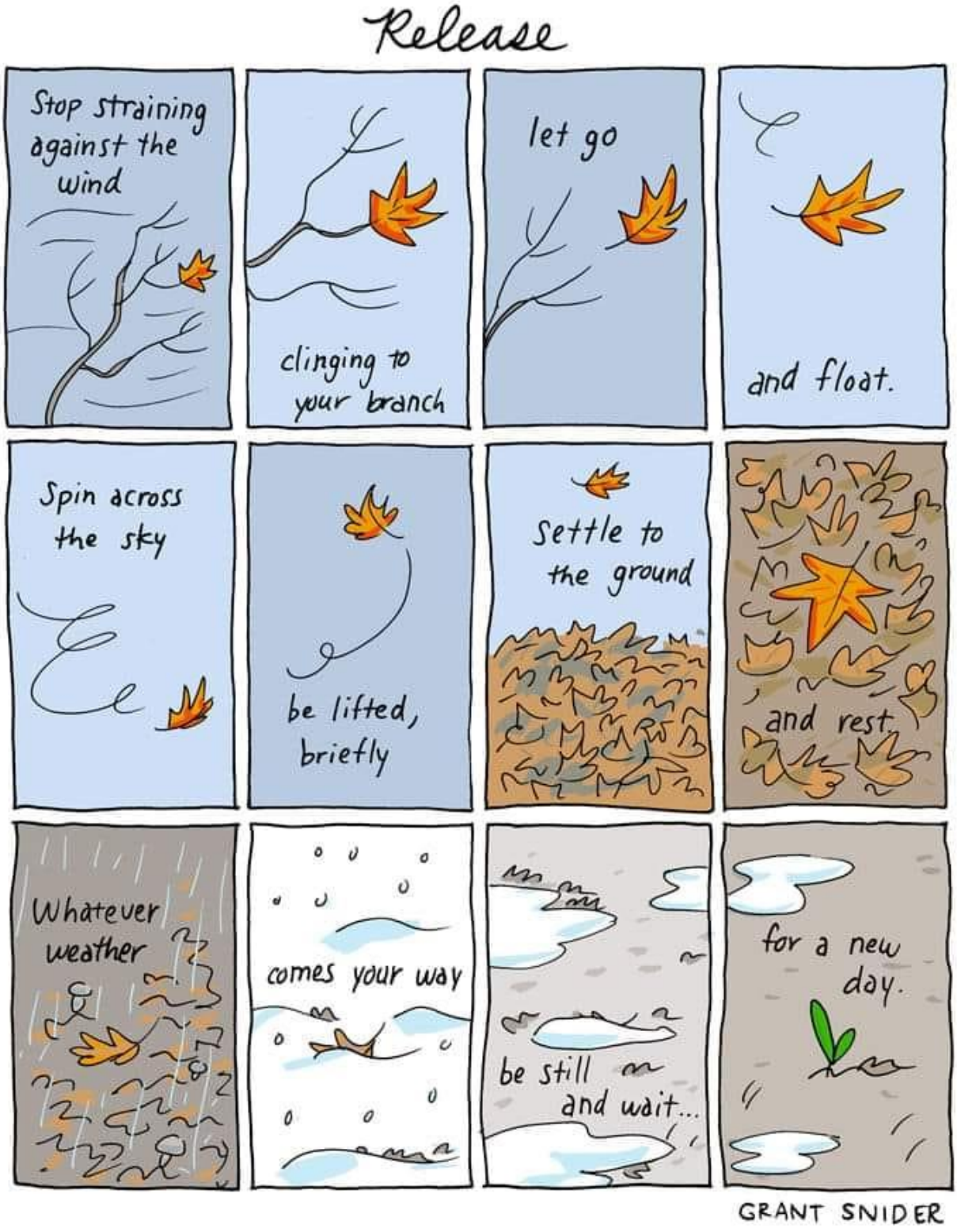
That's not quite the same as, "all kids need a nap."

Useful generalizations are essential to productive interventions and generous leadership.

Without generalizations, it's almost impossible to begin to serve people.

And there lies the trap. If we stick with them too long, or insist that they are absolute, or fail to seek out the exceptions that all generalizations have, then we end up excluding or ignoring people who need to be seen. Which betrays all the work we set out to do.

We begin with a market or an audience, but we ultimately serve the individual.
~Seth Godin



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